



Dear friends in Christ,

As you gather for synod assembly once again this year you will come together to worship the Triune God, learn together, and support one another in faithful witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. You do this through hearing and sharing your stories of faith, connecting and collaborating with others on how to address ministry challenges and opportunities, and reflecting on your baptismal call in community as you engage in the business of the assembly. For many, the synod assembly and other gatherings of the synod serves to inspire, encourage, and equip you as you faithfully join in God's mission to love and bless this world.

This synod joins with eleven other synods in Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois to form Region 5. As part of region 5 of the ELCA, your synod bishop, staff, and other synodical leaders engage in similar collaborative efforts as a region; gathering together for worship, sharing experience and expertise, and conducting other business to address leadership needs and strengthen congregational vitality. It is my privilege to convene such gatherings and support avenues of collaboration for the sake of spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people.

As candidacy and leadership manager for region 5, much of my work is spent working with synod candidacy committees. "Candidacy" is the term used to describe our process of forming and preparing people to serve as a pastor or deacon in the ELCA. We gratefully receive those who are considering a call to rostered ministry; help them in their continued discernment, and accompany them as they are formed to serve this church. Like the many faithful volunteers that serve on your synod candidacy committee, I am honored to meet students, help them develop as leaders, and explore with them how God is calling them to service in the world.

Additionally, Region 5 joins together to providing part time staffing for our archives, housed at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Our archivist, Sue Dodd, collects records of and responds to inquiries concerning: synods, deceased rostered personnel, and dissolved congregations within region 5. This work both preserves institutional records and documents the historical record of the institution within the context of the larger world. Approximately 200 requests come in each year from individuals for information found in the region 5 archives. As congregations in the region make decisions to close, Sue is a resource to you in determining what records to save and how to transfer them to the archives.

Thank you for your synod's participation in this shared ministry and for the privilege to serve among you.

Rev. Ramie L. Bakken

Region 5 ELCA office
P.O. Box 811
Black River Falls, WI 54615
Rev. Ramie Bakken
ramie.bakken@elca.org
773.380.2111

Region 5 Archives
Wartburg Seminary
333 Wartburg Place
Dubuque, IA 52003
Sue Dodd; 563.589.0320
sdodd@wartburgseminary.edu